

Frequently Asked Questions



What does it mean to stay safe around animals?

Staying safe around animals means not taking chances with unfamiliar or unfriendly animals. Most animals seem friendly and harmless. Yet, every year in the U.S. animals:
Bite millions of people – many of them children
Seriously injure thousands of people
Kill about 100 people
Most biting incidents involve dogs. However, any kind of animal is potentially dangerous.

Why should I learn about staying safe?

Because your health may depend on it!

More likely than not, your job or a favorite recreational activity will bring you in contact with an unfamiliar or unfriendly animal at some time.

You can help protect yourself and others by knowing how to:

Recognize the warning signs of aggressive behavior
Avoid or prevent an animal attack
Defend yourself if attacked

Who's at risk of being attacked by an animal?

Almost everyone at one time or another, but especially:

- Children
- Animal control/ shelter personnel
- Bicyclists
- Cable TV and repair personnel
- Delivery personnel
- Joggers
- Law enforcement personnel
- Mail carriers
- Meter readers
- Pedestrians

Why do animals attack people?

There are many possible reasons. Animals may attack if they are:

- Protecting offspring, territory or children
- Threatened
- In pain, injured or ill
- Surprised
- Bothered while eating or sleeping
- Frustrated (from being chained or tied up, for example)
- Excited, nervous or “playing” An animal may also attack for no apparent reason, or if bred and trained to be vicious.

How can I tell if an animal is dangerous?

In most cases, there are warning signs. With a dog, for example, be especially alert for:

- An aggressive posture – The ears are erect, the body is stiff or tense, and the tail is stiff or moving rapidly.
- A fearful posture – the ears are back, the body is crouched with the head down, and the tail hangs down or is tucked between the legs.
- Other signs watch for:
- Growling, snarling or snapping
- Bared teeth or curled lips
- Hair standing on end.
- A wagging tail is not necessarily a sign that a dog is friendly. Be aware of any unusual or strange behavior.

With any unfamiliar animal, pay special attention to:

- Behavior
- Body posture
- Hair
- Mouth and teeth
- Noises
- Tail

Take steps to avoid trouble :

Don't go in yards or homes until you're sure all pets have been properly restrained. Follow your employer's guidelines.

Call ahead to homes

if possible and ask the owners to restrain their pets – in a pen or closed room, or chained outside.

Never approach or touch

an unfamiliar or unfriendly animal. Never tease or threaten any animal.. Remember, even small pets can cause serious injury.

Look for signs that an animal is around

a warning sticker on the mailbox, a food or water dish, a doghouse, etc.

Don't surprise a dog

as you near, talk softly, make a noise, whistle, etc.

Keep a safe distance from shrubs

parked cars and other places where an animal may hide or sleep.

Choose a safe route

if you jog walk or bike. Avoid homes and neighborhoods where animals are known to roam freely.

Stray away from stray dogs and dog packs

and places where they're likely to be found (such as abandoned buildings or back alleys).

Prevent animal attacks while you work

When you're at someone's door:

Stay alert

an animal may suddenly appear from another part of the house.

Protect yourself

using a bag, a package, a clipboard, etc., as a shield. Always keep it between you and the animal.

Politely ask the owner

to properly restrain all pets if you need to open the door. (Having the owner hold the pet isn't safe.)

Talk to owners in a friendly voice

don't be abusive or threatening. An angry voice may provoke an angry pet.

Keep one foot on the outside door until all pets have been properly restrained. Explain that this is a routine safety practice.

When you're working inside someone's home:**Remain cautious**

and alert once you enter the home and begin work. A pet may escape and pay you a surprise visit.

Don't attempt to work inside

or make a delivery until all pets have been properly restrained.

Call for the owner

if a pet does escape. Stop working and stay calm. Face the pet and talk softly (but don't reach out to it).

Know how to protect yourself

If you're threatened :

Remain calm, move smoothly and slowly. Avoid nervous or jerky movements.

Face the animal never run or turn your back.

Shield yourself – hold your bag, a clipboard or a package in front of you.

Don't make loud or threatening noises. Avoid making any threatening gestures as well.

Don't look directly into a dog's eyes – look just over the dog's head.

Back out of the area – move slowly and continue to face the animal.

Give firm, simple commands. For example, say:

- No
- Stay
- Down
- Go home
- Use the animal's name if you know it.

If you're attacked:

Hold your ground – don't turn your back or try to run away. Try to keep the animal in front of you.

Use your arm if you don't have a shield. Extend your forearm across your waist, keeping your fist clenched. Use your left-arm if you are right handed and vice versa.

Use a chemical spray only as the last resort. You could miss, spray yourself or make the animal even angrier. Don not use a spray when other people are nearby.

Let the animal bite your shield always try to keep something between yourself and the animal.

Curl up into a ball if you're knocked down. Cover your head and neck with your arms. An attacking animal may lose interest if you "play dead."

Know what to do if you're bitten or scratched.

Any bit or scratch that breaks the skin can cause infection.

1. Wash the wound thoroughly

- Use soap and water to clean the wound
- Apply a sterile dressing
- Avoid moving the affected limb if possible

2. Seek immediate medical help;

- Explain exactly what happened, including whether the animal was wild or stray.
- Ask the health-care provider about a tetanus booster and/or rabies vaccination.

3. Remember as many details as possible; write down:

- A description of the animal (breed, color, size, collar, etc.)
- The time and location of the incident

4. Report all incidents to the proper authorities;

- Contact the animal control, police or sheriff's department, and your local health department. The animal may have to be quarantined.

Help prevent rabies:

Although rabies is no longer common in humans, several cases occur in the U.S. each year. Any mammal – not just dogs – can spread this disease.

Follow these safety tips:

- Report all stray animals and loose livestock to the animal control police or sheriff's department.
- Don't feed or handle wild animals, loose livestock or strays. Stay away from them.
- Never keep a wild animal as a pet.
- Be especially careful around small wild animals, such as skunks, bats, foxes and raccoons. (Rabies often occurs in these animals.) If bitten by a wild or stray animal, or by livestock: Try to confine or isolate the animal if you can do so safely. This will allow the animal to be tested for rabies.

Stay safe around animals!

Be alert for animals, especially dogs.

Seek immediate medical help if bitten or scratched.

Know how to protect yourself.

Report all incidents to the animal control, police or sheriff's department, and your supervisor. Don't take chances with animals.

**SPAY/NEUTER ASSISTANCE IN THE ST. TAMMANY PARISH AREA:
WITH THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS, THERE ARE CERTAIN
QUALIFICATIONS SUCH AS INCOME, RESIDENCE, ETC. PLEASE CALL
THE NUMBERS PROVIDED FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

- **COVINGTON (MUST LIVE WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS OF COVINGTON) CONTACT (985) 871-1605.**
- **ABITA SPRINGS, FOLSOM, MANDEVILLE CONTACT (985) 727-2748.**
- **PEARL RIVER AND SLIDELL CONTACT (985) 641-0463**

What do you mean by spaying or neutering?

Spaying is the procedure used for female pets. Neutering generally refers to the procedure used for male pets.

They're ways of providing birth control for dogs and cats by removing reproductive organs.

Through spaying or neutering, you can:

Help your pet have a happier, healthier and longer life.

Help all pets by reducing the number of dogs and cats condemned to live without homes and without love.

Why should I know about spaying and neutering?

Because all of us – even those who do not have pets – are affected by animal overpopulation.

Millions of tax dollars are spent annually to care for lost, abandoned and unwanted pets – and millions more to destroy those that find no homes.

Health and safety are threatened by rabies, dog bites, cat scratches and car crashes. Property may be damaged and livestock killed or injured when pets run “wild” or in packs. Yards and walkways can be fouled with urine and feces.

Millions of cats and dogs are killed each year – at least half in pounds and shelters, the rest by injury, poisoning, exposure, starvation and disease. Most of these victims are unwanted offspring of family pets.

Spaying a female pet:

- Eliminates the heat cycle (“estrus”). Dogs are in heat for about 21 days twice a year, cats are less predictable, but can be in heat 3-15 days, 3 or more times a year.
- Ends crying and nervous pacing of a cat in heat; ends the frantic efforts of a dog or cat to get outside and find a mate.
- Stops the bloody discharge of a dog in heat. The discharge, which can stain rugs, furniture, etc.; attracts male dogs. (If the scent rugs off on your clothes, you may be “hounded” by admirers!)
- Stops unwelcome visits by hordes of yapping or yowling “suitsors.” Male pets can be drawn from blocks around by the scent of a female in heat – even when she’s kept indoors!

Neutering a male pet

- Stops spraying – a cat’s “marking” of territory with foul smelling urine – in most cases. (If the habit is already established, it may not be completely eliminated.)

- Stops the mating drive by removing organs that produce sex hormones. (It may take at least one month for hormones already in the bloodstream to disappear.)
- Reduces the urge to roam in search of a mate – which in turn, reduces the risk of fights, injury, poisoning or death in traffic. (Even if kept inside, unneutered males will howl and beg to get out.)
- Reduces mounting of furniture, cushions, and people's legs by frustrated dogs – a behavior embarrassing to many, even frightening to some.

Improved health

Improved health is a long-term benefit. Spaying or neutering provides protection from: Breast Cancer. Almost half of unspayed dogs develop breast tumors. Virtually none do if spayed before their first heat, and chances are reduced if spayed thereafter.

Cats have fewer breast tumors, but when they do, they are nearly always malignant. Spaying almost eliminates this risk.

Male Genital Problems

- About 60% of older unneutered dogs suffer from enlarged prostate glands. Neutering lowers the risk of this painful disorder, as well as other problems.
- Both dogs and cats have reduced risk of prostate cancer if neutered, and no risk of testicular tumors.
- Uterine disease
By removing the uterus, spaying eliminates the site of common – and serious – diseases, such as pyometra (a life-threatening infection) and cancer.
- Other health risks:
 - By spaying or neutering your pet, you can eliminate the dangers of:
 - Mastitis (inflammation of the breast)
 - Ovarian cysts
 - Miscarriage
 - Complications in delivery

... and reduce the risk of injuries and abscesses from fights.

Add them all up, and these benefits mean longer life! For example, studies show that: Spayed and neutered cats have twice the average life expectancies as unspayed and unneutered cats.

(Because of the wide range of life spans from breed to breed, similar figures for dogs are not available. On the average, though, spayed and neutered dogs live longer, too!)

What is rabies?

Rabies is a viral infection that affects the nervous system of mammals. The incubation period, the period between exposure to the disease and the onset of symptoms, ranges from two weeks to many months. Rabies is almost always fatal once symptoms occur. These symptoms may include behavior changes, like unusual aggressiveness or paralysis (frequently beginning in the hind legs or the throat of an animal). Prompt vaccination

following a bite can prevent rabies in humans. Up-to-date vaccinations in dogs, cats and livestock, prior to exposure, can protect these animals against the disease.

What do I do if I'm exposed to rabies?

If you are bitten or scratched by a wild or sick animal, or get saliva from a rabies-suspect animal into an open wound or onto a mucous membrane, wash the area thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical attention immediately. Try to capture the animal without damaging the head or risking further exposure. Notify your parish health authority immediately. Disinfect any surface contaminated with tissues or fluids from a rabies-suspect animal with fresh 10 percent solution of household bleach in water.